

Tribal Food Sovereignty in the Northwest

Food sovereignty is the ability of communities to determine the quantity and quality of the food that they consume by controlling how their food is produced and distributed. It is centered on justice and equity of production, distribution, and consumption of foods, rather than fluctuations in markets and corporate dividends.



Tenets of Tribal Food Sovereignty

- Empowers Native households to cultivate healthy, traditional foods
- Focuses on food for people
- Values food providers
- Localizes food systems
- Builds knowledge and skills
- Works with nature
- Respects and provides opportunities for local workforce in cultivating and distributing food

What is Food Security?



Food security means access by all people at all times to enough food for an active, healthy life. If people do not have adequate access to healthy and affordable food, food insecurity exists. Food sovereignty and food security are inextricably linked.



Why is food sovereignty important to Tribes?

Native Americans and Alaska Natives are more likely to experience food insecurity than many other racial and ethnic groups in the U.S. This is due to a number of factors, including displacement from their traditional homelands, destruction of their traditional economies and food systems, and the imposition of Euro-American land management and property practices. Many Indigenous people in the U.S. live without adequate access to healthy and nutritious foods, or where access is limited to highly processed and refined foods. This removal from traditional foodways has caused severe health problems, including diabetes, heart disease, anxiety, and depression.

Tribal food sovereignty advocates for Indigenous rights to traditional practices, development of local food economies, the right to food, seed sovereignty, and access to lands with culturally important foods. Many Native communities are returning to healthy, traditional foods and practices to combat food insecurity and reestablish Tribal food sovereignty.

How does climate change affect Tribal food sovereignty?

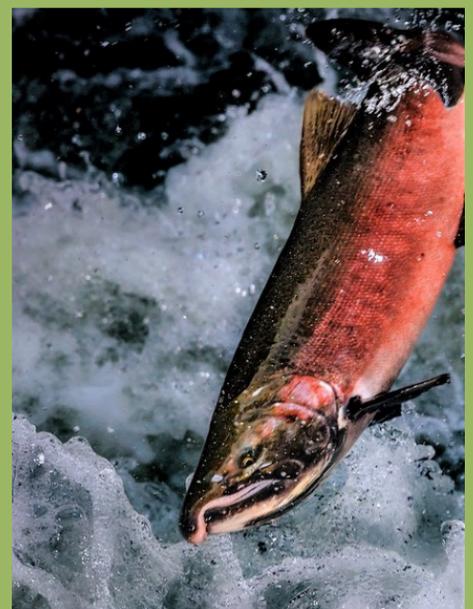


Rising temperatures, changing precipitation patterns, and an increase in extreme events threaten traditional food systems and make it more difficult for Tribes to produce, harvest, and access traditional food sources. Rising temperatures can also make it more challenging to store foods in traditional ways. For example, in Alaska, permafrost cellars that store frozen food supplies are beginning to thaw.

While climate change is impacting food security throughout the U.S., food insecurity has disproportionately impacted Indigenous communities. In the Northwest, climate change continues to alter Indigenous access to several important species, such as salmon, berries, and shellfish.

What can be done to support Tribal food sovereignty?

- Build partnerships with Tribes centered on trust and Tribal sovereignty
- Ask your Tribal partners what they need to ensure food sovereignty
- Increase Tribal access to land with traditional foods
- Support Indigenous agency in their own food production
- Ensure management strategies are not adversely impacting Indigenous foods
- Support climate-smart adaptation practices that protect and promote Indigenous ways of life and food sources
- Support Indigenous agriculture
- Provide Indigenous workforce opportunities in the cultivation and distribution of food



Additional Resources

1. [Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians](https://atntribes.org/) <https://atntribes.org/>
2. [USDA Indigenous Food Sovereignty Initiative](https://www.usda.gov/tribalrelations/usda-programs-and-services/usda-indigenous-food-sovereignty-initiative) <https://www.usda.gov/tribalrelations/usda-programs-and-services/usda-indigenous-food-sovereignty-initiative>
3. Northwest Climate Hub: [Tribal Food Sovereignty and Climate Change in the Northwest](https://www.climatehubs.usda.gov/hubs/northwest/topic/tribal-food-sovereignty-and-climate-change-northwest) <https://www.climatehubs.usda.gov/hubs/northwest/topic/tribal-food-sovereignty-and-climate-change-northwest>
4. [Tribal Climate Adaptation Plans](https://tribalclimateguide.uoregon.edu/adaptation-plans) <https://tribalclimateguide.uoregon.edu/adaptation-plans>